

Cut red tape to make trade easier in post-Brexit Britain

BRITISH businesses could find it easier to export and import goods after Brexit if the Government begins designing new systems now, research revealed yesterday.

The Leave Means Leave campaign group said its analysis destroyed the "myth" that leaving the EU will see lines of freight lorries queueing at borders once Britain is out of the free trade Single Market and customs union.

Co-chairman John Longworth, former head of the British Chambers of Commerce, said his "blueprint for frictionless trade" could avoid future problems and streamline existing procedures to help British firms trade around the world.

Robust

He urged the Government to start work quickly on getting the right procedures in place to ensure trade continues smoothly after Britain's expected departure from the EU in spring 2019.

Mr Longworth's report found: "The fact that the UK has robust and longstanding systems in place for aspects such as export documentation, as well as the opportunity to streamline customs procedures on our own terms, means the UK Government can immediately implement several procedures to facilitate our trade with the EU and the rest of the world."

Customs clearance procedures, both within the UK and at the border with other countries, were

By Alison Little
Deputy Political Editor

of "critical importance" to businesses, and an issue many were "far more concerned about than any potential future tariffs with the EU," he said.

"The UK should not be daunted by the measure of the task ahead, as the measures outlined in this paper would go a long way towards not only addressing immediate challenges, but also facilitating more effective trade in the future," he added.

Mr Longworth said technology will be key by creating "virtual borders" using, for example, number plate scanning to allow electronic customs registration before trucks cross frontiers.

He also recommends giving more businesses abroad powers to complete self-assessment reports on import duties to speed up the declaration process and allowing bodies such as the Chambers of Commerce to oversee the "trusted trader" accreditation process.

The report coincided with a new poll showing public support for Brexit has hit a five-month high, with 55 per cent of people now in favour of leaving the EU.

For the third month in a row, more than half – 55 per cent – also approved of how the Government is handling the Brexit process, said pollster Orb International.

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Picture: DAVID HARTLEY
JEREMY Corbyn yesterday suffered a new blow to his authority as a poll revealed that fewer than half of Labour voters think he would be a better prime minister than Theresa May.

Another survey indicated the Tories had opened up a commanding 21 per cent lead over Labour.

The findings come as Parliament returns from its Easter break tomorrow with parties vying for success in the May 4 local elections.

Pollsters at Opinium found that just 45 per cent of Labour supporters backed Mr Corbyn as best PM when given a choice of him or Mrs May.

Among all voters, support for Mr Corbyn to move into Downing Street was 14 per cent, while Mrs May was preferred over him by 47 per cent.

And an opinion poll by ComRes has the Conservatives on 46 per cent and Labour unchanged on 25 per cent.

Last week Middlesbrough South Labour MP Tom Blenkinsop declared openly that the party had lost a local council seat to the Tories in a by-election because people did not like Mr Corbyn's leadership.

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